

DETAILED ACTION

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Walter Nielsen on September 13, 2008.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claim 1 has been replaced by :

-- Claim 1. A computer-implemented method, comprising:
displaying an interface screen to allow an applicant from a first company to electronically enter a nondisclosure agreement number corresponding to a non-disclosure agreement;
electronically determining whether the non-disclosure agreement number matches a non-disclosure agreement number in authorization data as part of a request for access from the applicant; if not, sending a denial email to the applicant;
if so, electronically determining whether the first company has executed the non-disclosure agreement;
if so, electronically determining whether the applicant is associated with the first company;
if so, displaying an interface screen comprising terms of an authorized disclosure letter and further displaying a choice of accepting the terms or not;
electronically determining whether the applicant agrees to the terms;
if the applicant agrees to the terms, displaying an interface screen to allow the applicant to select one of a plurality of programs, each of which is associated with a corresponding list of company names authorized to exchange information with the applicant;
responsive to a selection by the applicant of one of the plurality of programs, displaying the corresponding list of company names; and

responsive to a selection by the applicant of a second company name from the list of company names, electronically providing the applicant with access to information belonging to the second company. - -

Claim 9 has been replaced by:

-- Claim 9. An apparatus comprising:

a controller, a display, and an input device;

the controller to display an interface screen on the display to allow an applicant from a first company to electronically enter into the input device a non-disclosure agreement number corresponding to a non-disclosure agreement;

the controller to electronically determine whether the non-disclosure agreement number matches a nondisclosure agreement number in authorization data as part of a request for access from the applicant;

if not, the controller to send a denial email to the applicant;

if so, the controller to electronically determine whether the first company has executed the non-disclosure agreement;

if so, the controller to electronically determine whether the applicant is associated with the first company;

if so, the controller to display an interface screen on the display comprising terms of an authorized disclosure letter and further to display a choice of accepting the terms or not;
the controller to electronically determine whether the applicant agrees to the terms;

if the applicant agrees to the terms, the controller to display an interface screen on the display to allow the applicant to electronically select one of a plurality of programs, each of which is associated with a corresponding list of company names authorized to exchange information with the applicant;

responsive to a electronic selection by the applicant of one of the plurality of programs, the controller to display on the display the corresponding list of company names; and
responsive to a electronic selection by the applicant of a second company name from the list of company names, the controller to provide the applicant via the display with access to information belonging to the second company. - -

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Claim 10 has been replaced by :

-- Claim 10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the authorization data comprises data regarding which company names companies are authorized to the selected program. --

Claim 13 has been replaced by:

-- Claim 13. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein at least one of the plurality of programs the-pr-program comprises a joint-development program in which the first and second companies are participants. --

Claim 14 has been replaced by:

-- Claim 14. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the information comprises confidential information belonging to the second company. --

Claim 15 has been replaced by:

-- Claim 15. A signal-bearing medium comprising instructions, wherein the instructions when read and executed by a processor comprise:
displaying an interface screen to allow an applicant from a first company to electronically enter a nondisclosure agreement number corresponding to a non-disclosure agreement;
electronically determining whether the non-disclosure agreement number matches a non-disclosure agreement number in authorization data as part of a request for access from the applicant; if not, electronically sending a denial email to the applicant;
if so, electronically determining whether the first company has executed the non-disclosure agreement;
if so, electronically determining whether the applicant is associated with the first company;
if so, displaying an interface screen comprising terms of an authorized disclosure letter and further displaying a choice of accepting the terms or not;
electronically determining whether the applicant agrees to the terms;
if the applicant agrees to the terms, displaying an interface screen to allow the applicant to select

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one of a plurality of programs, each of which is associated with a corresponding list of company names authorized to exchange information with the applicant; responsive to a electronic selection by the applicant of one of the plurality of programs, displaying the corresponding list of company names; and
responsive to a electronic selection by the applicant of a second company name from the list of company names, electronically providing the applicant with access to information belonging to the second company number. - -

Claim 16 has been replaced by:

-- Claim 16. The signal-bearing medium of claim 15, wherein the instructions further comprise:
providing an access control interface, wherein the access control interface allows the second company to control access to the information. - -

Claim 17 has been replaced by:

-- Claim 17. The signal-bearing medium of claim 15, wherein the instructions further comprise:
providing a request access interface, wherein the request access interface allows the applicant to request access to the information. - -

Claim 19 has been replaced by:

-- Claim 19. The signal-bearing medium of claim 15, wherein the instructions further comprise:
providing a display of companies authorized to exchange information with the applicant on a per-program bases. - -

Claim 20 has been replaced by:

-- 20. (Currently Amended) The signal-bearing medium of claim 15, wherein the instructions further comprise:
providing a display of contact information for companies who are participants in the

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program. - -

Claim 23 has been replaced by:

- - Claim 23. A system server to facilitate exchange of confidential information about a plurality of controlled-communication programs, comprising:

a memory to store an authorized disclosure letter, authorization data, and a controller having a plurality of instructions;

a display;

an input device; and

a processor communicatively coupled to the memory and the display, the processor to execute selected ones of the instructions to:

display an interface screen on the display to allow an applicant from a first company to enter into the input device a non-disclosure agreement number corresponding to a non-disclosure agreement;

determine whether the non-disclosure agreement number matches a nondisclosure agreement number in authorization data as part of a request for access from an applicant;

if so, determine whether the first company has executed the non-disclosure agreement;

if so, determine whether the applicant is associated with the first company;

if so, display an interface screen on the display comprising terms of an authorized disclosure letter and further displaying a choice of accepting the terms or not;

determine whether the applicant agrees to the terms, using the input device;

if the applicant agrees to the terms, display an interface screen on the display to allow the applicant to select, using the input device, one of a plurality of controlled-communication programs, each of which is associated with a corresponding list of company names authorized to exchange information with the applicant;

responsive to a selection by the applicant, using the input device, of one of the plurality of programs, display the corresponding list of company names on the display; and

responsive to a selection by the applicant, using the input device, of a second company name from the list of company names, provide the applicant with access to information belonging to the second company. - -

Allowable Subject Matter

2. Claims 1-10 and 11-23 are allowable over the prior art of record as argued by Applicant's representative in their response filed 2/7/08.

Conclusion

3. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Clement B. Graham whose telephone number is 571-272-6795. The examiner can normally be reached on 7am to 5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kambiz Abdi can be reached on (571) 272-6702. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

**/Frantzy Poinvil/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3692**

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